

Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs

KDVA Gram



"Serving those who served the Commonwealth and our great Nation."

2007-1

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Giving Back: Veteran to Veteran

A Frankfort veteran of modest means has made the largest individual donation ever made to the Homeless Veterans Trust Fund (HVTF), a component of the Veterans Program Trust Fund.

In March, William Kelley wrote a check in the amount of \$2,000. He designated his donation for the Homeless Veterans Program Trust Fund, which is a subdivision of the larger Veterans Program Trust Fund.

"I'm giving back to those who helped me," he said. Mr. Kelley is also eager to volunteer his time to help others at KDVA's Homeless Veterans Treatment and Transition Program in Lexington.

The donation reflects both his genuine desire to help other veterans and his sincere gratitude to the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs for help in resolving his claim for VA benefits.

KDVA Veterans Benefits Field Representative Richard Helton discovered the VA had mistakenly denied Mr. Kelley's claim, and then mistakenly closed his appeal.

It wasn't a particularly complicated case, nor was the amount of the back benefits Mr. Kelley received from the VA particularly large compared to amounts KDVA Field Operations staff has gotten for veterans in other cases.

But it is an example of the exceptional work KDVA Field Representatives perform every day for veterans throughout the state, to make sure every veteran receives the full benefits that he or she has earned.

"This is not just a job," Helton says, "it's an opportunity to serve and help veterans."

This is not the first substantial donation to the Homeless Veterans Trust Fund from an individual veteran. In 2004, the trust fund received a \$500 check from a veteran who included a letter thanking KDVA for help in resolving his claim.

The Homeless Veterans Trust Fund (HVTF) accepts tax-deductible donations from individuals and organizations. The HVTF seeks to prevent homelessness among veterans and help homeless veterans return to permanent housing quickly. It provides small, one-time cash grants for rent deposits, utility payments and other housing-related expenses. The HVTF represents a beacon of hope to veterans who otherwise would slip into or remain in a state of homelessness.



Commissioner's Corner

Other Duty Day at THVC

It's easy for headquarters staff to forget the hard, difficult work performed every day by staff out in the field.

That's why in January I assigned all 17 Frankfort Central Office staff to serve other duty in full shifts at Thomson-Hood Veterans Center in Wilmore.

There they worked in food service, housekeeping and patient care. They helped to feed residents, changed towels and ice water in resident rooms, swept, mopped and cleaned resident rooms, delivered food, and washed dishes.

This special duty had a dual purpose: 1) to reinforce Central Office understanding of and respect for the hardest and yet most important jobs in the Department, and 2) to show solidarity with and respect for THVC staff who worked heroically through a difficult virus outbreak in December.



I'd like to share with you some of the comments our staff made about their experiences working at THVC.

□ The staff works extremely hard, and they are dedicated to the veterans. The love and respect is evident in everything they do. At lunchtime, the aides prepared their trays. Not only did they know what food each individual would want, but they knew exactly how it should be prepared. Sometimes the small things are actually big things when your loved one is near the end. THVC nursing staff have both, big and small things, covered well.

□ I worked on the Lincoln Unit. My duties in the morning were to change and fill the ice cups for all the residents. Then I carried trays and helped with feeding during lunch. In the afternoon I changed out the towels and washcloths. The staff does a great job, and they really care. They did not stop and were constantly providing some form of care during my entire visit.

□ During my visit at THVC, I was paired with Charles Johnson in the Housekeeping Department. He

cut me no slack and was an outstanding teacher. He taught me how to enter a resident's room, cross-contamination issues and the order in which a room is cleaned. Gloves are worn during the cleaning process and changed at each room. Everyday the rooms and bathrooms are swept and mopped. Unless you have worked in housekeeping, you could not imagine how much hard work and dedication goes into these positions.

□ I worked in Dietary. I helped set up the line and served with Gregory, a veteran himself and a five-year employee at THVC who said he'd retire from there. He was great with some of the veterans who would come over and want a cup of coffee, etc. I worked the dish line after lunch, putting away clean dishes, pans, silverware, etc. The line just kept moving. It was hard work, and I don't know how much I really contributed, but I think they appreciated it.

□ I worked on the ward filling up ice water cups and ensuring all the resident had clean towels and washcloths. This is the ward where residents require the most care of their physical needs. Everyone who worked the ward knew every resident by first name and took as much time with them as I would if it were one of my loved ones, while still being very efficient and professional.

□ I worked in Dietary. I learned that from the time they walk in the door to the time they leave for the day they are always on the move. Everyone is part of the team and helps out. Everyone has their specific job to do, but they are willing and able to help when and where needed. After lunch I moved to patient care where I was able to talk with some of the veterans - they all have great stories to tell.

□ I worked on the Eisenhower Unit, where most of the residents have dementia and are limited in being able to take care of themselves. The staff is constantly moving around with the residents seeing to their needs. The staff stayed on schedule with meds, refreshments, baths and cleaning, even with many interruptions.

Les Beavers

BG (ret) Leslie E. Beavers
Commissioner, KDVA

Volunteer Veteran of the Century

105-year-old Veteran Has Never Stopped Helping Other Veterans

Walk into the volunteer room at the Louisville Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and the first person who stands up, greeting you with a smile that could shatter glass, is 105-year-old Robley Rex.

For more than 20 years, Mr. Rex has faithfully turned up at the VAMC to serve his fellow veterans. One of the most moving and inspiring sights at the hospital has always been the centenarian pushing the wheelchairs of veterans decades his junior.

As a youngster of 86, Mr. Rex discovered VA volunteering through the VFW.

"I liked what we were doing," he said. "It was just natural to become a volunteer here."

Shortly afterward, he and a friend started volunteering at the hospital together, arriving at 6:30 a.m. to deliver charts to the doctors by 7 a.m.

After growing up on a farm in Christian County, Mr. Rex volunteered for the Army upon turning 18 in 1919.

"At that age, I was looking for adventure and that was it," he said.

He served in Europe as a private in Intelligence, working with maps and plans and training.

"I just did what they told me to do," he said, his twinkling eyes implying 77-year-old secrets.

Upon returning home, he got a job as a mail clerk with the railroad, sorting the U.S. Mail for the carriers and dropping it off at each stop along a Cincinnati-Knoxville-Chattanooga-Louisville-St. Louis-Chicago-Evansville run.

Once during a stop in Evansville he crossed the river to look up a young lady in Owensboro. During his basic training at Camp Taylor, Grace Bivins had entertained the troops with her piano playing, and Mr. Rex never forgot her.

"She was still single," he says. They got married in 1924.

"My wife was the smartest person in the world," he says. She handled their money, saving most of it and ensuring they lived thriftfully. "We always lived on less than we got," he says. After they bought a

house, they were never again in debt. "Being in debt is a bigger burden than young people can bear," he says. "Anybody can be successful if you live on as little money as possible."

Mr. Rex always gives Grace the credit for his longevity.

"Everyone thinks I'm joking," he says. "But I married the right woman. She gave me the right food and put me to bed and got me up."

Grace died in 1992 at age 91. Fourteen years later, Mr. Rex still misses her, choking up and wiping away tears at her memory.

Besides marrying the right person, the best advice he gives to younger veterans is to "make the most of their military service."

Mr. Rex says that even 80 years ago, he received certain preferences for being a veteran.

"When I took the exam for the railroad job, I got 10 points added to my score and that gave me the job," he says. "Without that, I wouldn't have passed."

"As the years went by, when they were reducing the force, they kept me and laid off fellows who were not veterans - that was a wonderful benefit."

Between his VAMC volunteering and his decades of service work with Veteran Service Organization, Mr. Rex has put in a lifetime of helping veterans over two centuries.

"I've been in that work 75 years," he figures.



Editor's Note: Mr. Rex has been under the weather lately - we wish him a speedy recovery

Combat-Related Compensation Claims Made Easier

Washington, DC—The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) has listened to its veterans by making it easier for them to apply for compensation for combat-related injuries. After receiving feedback from all branches of service and many retired veterans, Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC)—a benefit that provides dual compensation for eligible military retirees—has significantly revised its claim form, making it easier to understand who is eligible for CRSC, and what information veterans should provide in order to be eligible to receive their compensation.

“Time and again, we heard from retired veterans that the CRSC claim form was difficult and time consuming to complete,” said COL John F. Sackett, Chief of the U.S. Army CRSC Division under the U.S. Army Physical Disabilities Agency (USAPDA). “Many have started the claim form and set it aside because it was too overwhelming, they did not understand the supporting documentation requirements, or it was just too hard to read.”

CRSC helps 20-year military retirees by providing a monthly tax-free compensation (full concurrent receipt option) that supplements Veterans Administration (VA) disability and military retired payments. The retired veteran has to have a 10 percent or greater VA disability rating, and must be able to prove that the disability is combat-related—i.e., training that simulates war, hazardous duty, an instrumentality of war, or armed conflict.

The claim form, which is available now, has several improvements. Simple changes such as a larger font and text boxes make it easier to use. In addition, the new form takes claimants through a sequence of eligibility questions and prompts them for documentation every step of the way.

For example: under the “Preliminary Requirements” section, the first question for Active Duty Retirees is “Did you serve at least 20 years on active duty?” and then asks them to attach a copy of their DD214(s) proving 20 years of active duty service. Now, there is no question of the supporting documentation needed for the CRSC claim.

Everything a retired veteran needs to know is on the form itself.

Even with the improvements, veterans may still have questions. To address those questions, the Army has created an enhanced CRSC website (www.crsc.army.mil). Once there, they can click on “Retired Veterans” to obtain information on eligibility criteria, the claim process, answers to frequently asked questions, claim resources, and download a claim form. In addition, veterans can call the CRSC Service Center at 1-866-281-3254 or reach it via e-mail at crsc.info@us.army.mil.

“Our veterans have laid their lives on the line for our nation, and we owe it to them to do whatever we can to help the retired veterans who are eligible for CRSC get the compensation they deserve,” said COL Sackett. “The new claim form, along with our enhanced website, is a significant step forward in achieving that goal.”

Department of the Army
U.S. Army Physical Disabilities Agency/Combat
Related Special Compensation (CRSC)
200 Stovall Street
Alexandria, VA 22332
Phone: 1-866-281-3254
Email: crsc.info@us.army.mil
Website: www.CRSC.army.mil

Commander (adm-1-CRSC)
U.S. Coast Guard Personnel Command
4200 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22203-1804
1-800-772-8274
www.uscg.mil/hq/cgpc/adm/adm1.htm

Secretary of Navy Council of Review Boards
Combat-Related Special Compensation Branch
720 Kennon Street SE, Suite 309
Washington Navy Yard, DC 20374
Website: www.hq.navy.mil/ncpb/CRSCB/combatrelated.htm

United States Air Force
Disability Division (CRSC)
550 C Street West Ste 6
Randolph AFB TX 78150-4708
Phone: 1-800-616-3775
Website: www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/disability/CRSC/CRSCnew.htm

Recognizing Cold War Service

Certificates Now Available

If you served in the U.S. military between 1945 and 1991, you can now receive a certificate recognizing your Cold War service.

The Secretary of Defense approved awarding Cold War Recognition Certificates to all members of the armed forces and qualified federal government civilian personnel who faithfully and honorably served the United States anytime during the Cold War era, which is defined as Sept. 2, 1945 to Dec. 26, 1991.

The United States Army, the executive agency for the Cold War Recognition program, operates the only official site on which to request Cold War Recognition Certificates.

Cold War Recognition Certificates are available to qualified individuals at no cost. Any other site offering these certificates or replicas for sale or purchase are not official sites and are not approved or endorsed by the US Army.

Due to the remarkable success of this program, turn-around time for mailing certificates will be a minimum of 2 months. The CWRS Operations Team is working as fast as possible to clear the backlog. Please do not request feedback prior to 2 months from the request date. Thank you for your patience and interest in the Cold War Recognition program.

Who is eligible?

All members of the armed forces and federal government civilian personnel who faithfully served the United States during the Cold War era, Sept. 2, 1945 to Dec. 26, 1991. Individuals requesting a certificate will certify that their character of service was honorable. Acceptable supporting document for proof of service is any official government or military document with recipient's name, Social Security Number or Military Service Number or Foreign Service Number, and a date showing at least one day of service during the Cold War era (2 September 1945 to 26 December 1991).

You can Fill out the application online via US Army Human Resources Command
https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/TAGD/coldwar/us_application.htm

Mail or fax the application to the Cold War Office along with your supporting document to:

Commander
 U.S. Army Human Resources Command
 Cold War Recognition Program, Hoffman II,
 Room 3N45
 ATTN: AHRC-CWRS
 200 Stovall Street
 Alexandria, VA 22332-0473
 FAX: 1-800-723-9262

You may also contact the program via phone (703) 325-5864 or email CWRS Team (cwrs1@conus.army.mil).

Save The Date

Friday, June 1, 2007

**Governor Ernie Fletcher
and Special Guests**

**To Dedicate
Kentucky Veterans Cemetery Central**

Fort Knox, Kentucky

Watch for Further Information

“Totally Different”

New Assistant Administrator at EKVC Loves the Focus on the Mission

Judith Branham could not be happier in her new job.

“This is the most wonderful group of people I’ve ever worked with,” says the new Assistant Administrator at Eastern Kentucky Veterans Center in Hazard. “I’ve never seen a more dedicated staff.”

Ms. Branham came to EKVC in October with a decade of experience as a nursing home administrator, including eight years at one of the highest-rated health facilities in the state. But EKVC caught her by surprise.

“It’s totally different,” she says. “This doesn’t even feel like a nursing home to me.”

EKVC - like KDVA’s nursing homes in Wilmore and Hanson - provides many services to its residents that are not available to residents in for-profit nursing homes.

“The field trips taking residents to restaurants and shopping and special events, and the outdoor activities like picnics,” Ms. Branham marveled. “That’s unheard of in privately-owned nursing homes.

“The intergenerational activities (with children of staff) are just phenomenal,” she says. “When our older guys see these kids, I’ve never seen anybody else’s eyes light up like that. It just warms your heart.”

She also praised EKVC for having security

guards on staff - “That’s so important for the Alzheimer’s patients, who in the early stages like to walk.”

Ms. Branham was born and reared in Floyd County and got her Master’s Degree in Business Administration from Morehead University. Today she commutes to Hazard from her Floyd County home.

“It’s an hour commute, but it lets me plan my day,” she says.

Ms. Branham took a pay cut to take the job at EKVC, but says it was well worth it. “To go home knowing that not only did you help someone, but also know that the residents here are being well taken care of.

“It makes you want to come to work.”

She credits Administrator Wade Lindon for the positive atmosphere.

“Wade is so caring and compassionate about everyone here - residents, their families, the staff.”

But it’s the focus on the mission that impresses her the most.

“Every decision is based on what’s best for the residents,” she says. “That’s the only mission.”



Honored Third Year in a Row

“Best of the Best in Perry County”

For the third year in a row, KDVA’s Eastern Kentucky Veterans Center has been named “Best of the Best” in Perry County.

The Hazard Herald’s annual contest asks readers to choose the best in several categories. EKVC won for Best Elderly Facility.

“Everyone who works here take pride in knowing

what a superior job we do for our veterans,” says EKVC Administrator Wade Lindon. “But it’s very rewarding to find out that our community also knows the job we do and appreciates us.”

EKVC opened in March 2002 and provides beds for 120 residents, including 30 in a special-care unit.

Kentucky Women Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Bazaar

Saturday, April 21, 2007

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m

**Lexington VA Medical Center
Leestown Division
2250 Leestown Road
Lexington, KY**



*Coordinated by the Kentucky Women Veterans Program
to meet the needs of the whole Woman Veteran.*

MIND

*Veteran Benefits
Crisis Intervention
Education
Military Records
more...*

BODY

*Healthcare Screenings
Nutrition
Exercise
Facials
Massage
more..*

SPIRIT

*Aromatherapy
Arts and Crafts
Aging
Professional Associations
more...*

Door Prizes

*Check in as early as 9:00 a.m. and spend the whole day
or simply drop by for a quick visit.*

*Volunteers of America's Homeless Veterans Treatment and Transition
Program will provide lunch from 12:00 to 1:30.*

*This is an opportunity for camaraderie, celebration, and information
that will benefit every Kentucky woman
who has served her country in the military.*

*For more information, visit our website at www.kdva.net or contact
Barbara at BarbaraA.Hale@ky.gov or toll free 1 (800) 928-4012.*



**Be a Part of the Kentucky Women Veterans Traveling Display.
Bring a photo of yourself in service that we can make a permanent
part of a new display honoring Kentucky's Women Veterans.**



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